1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
AW50 Badaga AW50

kallu. There is, further, a platform, made of bricks and mud, called mandhe kallu, whereon the Badagas, when not working, sit at ease. In their folk-tales men seated thereon are made to give information concerning the approach of strangers to the village. Strangers, who are not Badagas, are called Holeya. The Rev. G. Richter gives* Badaga Holeya as a division of the lowly Holeyas, who came to Coorg from the Mysore country. In front of the houses, the operations of drying and threshing grain are carried out. The cattle are kept in stone kraals, or covered sheds close to the habitations, and the litter is kept till it is knee or waist deep, and then carried away as manure for the Badaga's land, or planters' estates.

"Nobody," it has been said,† "can beat the Badaga at making mother earth produce to her utmost capacity, unless it be a Chinese gardener. To-day we see a portion of the hill side covered with rocks and boulders. The Badagas become possessed of this scene of chaos, and turn out into the place in hundreds, reducing it, in a few weeks, to neat order. The unwieldy boulders, having been rolled aside, serve their purpose by being turned into a wall to keep out cattle, etc. The soil is pounded and worried until it becomes amenable to reason, and next we see a green crop running in waves over the surface. The Badagas are the most progressive of all the hill tribes, and always willing to test any new method of cultivation, or new crops brought to their notice by the Nilgiri Horticultural Society."

Writing in 1832, Harkness states‡ that "on leaving his house in the morning the Burgher pays his adoration

* Manual of Coorg. † Pioneer, 4th October 1907.

‡ Description of a singular Aboriginal Race inhabiting the summit of the Neilgherry Hills.

1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
AW50 Badaga AW50

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to the god of day, proceeds to the tu-el or yard, in which the cattle have been confined, and, again addressing the sun as the emblem of Siva, asks his blessing, and liberates the herd. He allows the cattle to stray about in the neighbourhood of the village, on a piece of ground which is always kept for this purpose, and, having performed his morning ablutions, commences the milking. This is also preceded by further salutations and praises to the sun. On entering the house in the evening, the Burgher addresses the lamp, now the only light, or visible emblem of the deity. 'Thou, creator of this and of all worlds, the greatest of the great, who art with us, as well in the mountain as in the wilderness, who keepeth the wreaths that adorn the head from fading, who guardeth the foot from the thorn, God, among a hundred, may we be prosperous.'"

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The Badaga understands the rotation of crops well. On his land he cultivates bearded wheat (beer ganji), barley, onions, garlic, potatoes, kīrē (*Amarantus*), sāmai (*Panicum miliare*), tenai (*Setaria italica*), etc.

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(464)
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"Among the Badagas," Mr. Natesa Sastri writes, "the position of the women is somewhat different from what it is among most peoples. Every Badaga has a few acres to cultivate, but he does not mainly occupy himself with them, for his wife does all the out-door farm work, while he is engaged otherwise in earning something in hard cash. To a Badaga, therefore, his wife is his capital. Her labour in the field is considered to be worth one rupee per day, while an average male Badaga earns merely three annas. A Badaga woman, who has not her own acres to cultivate, finds work on some other lands. She thus works hard for her husband and family, and is quite content with the coarsest food—the korali (*Setaria italica*) flour—leaving the

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

Irregular Transactions

As a general rule Badagas, Kotas and Todas shift their cattle to new grazing independently of each other, at the beginning of each year. At present Kota and Badaga cattle are so few that it is rarely necessary to move them at all; but the Todas still practise transhumance within the limits of the plateau, occasionally with Badaga cattle mixed among their own. It was previously common for Badagas to participate in the annual migration of the Toda buffaloes; and sometimes they entrusted their buffaloes to the Toda partners, to take them to better summer grazing on the southern edge of the plateau (Ward, 1821, lxxiii; Rivers, 1906, 133, 137; Ranga, 1934, 24). There the Todas would mix their own herds with the Badaga buffaloes and enjoy the use of their milk, until they were returned home at the approach of the June monsoon.

Badagas and Todas sometimes exchange buffaloes in order to get others of more useful age or yield.[10] This barter only involves female animals and is typically the exchange of one buffalo of good yield for two of lower yield. Todas may also get non-sacred buffaloes from Badaga friends when they suddenly need the animals for sacrifice at a Toda funeral or sell them to Badagas when they need cash. Any difference outstanding after such transactions was formerly paid on the Badaga side by grain, cloth, or gold and silver ornaments; and on the Toda side by various bamboo and basketry articles. More recently the differences have been made up with money alone.

Todas sometimes ask their Badaga partners for financial loans. In the nineteenth century if the request produced no immediate result they would mortgage buffaloes to wealthy Badagas as security for a loan (Marshall, 1873, 130). Today one can still find Badagas lending money merely out of fear of the Todas' sorcery.

Sometimes when a Badaga wants to indulge in some illicit sexual activity he may ask his Toda partner to lend his own wife or find him a Toda girl; but as Toda women are generally rather free in their interaction with non-Todas it is usually no problem for the Badaga to importune a girl himself. Todas on the other hand have virtually no opportunity for intercourse with Badaga women. (Such at least is what reliable Badagas have said; the Toda men deny any such relations between the two communities.)[11]

Although it has not occurred within living memory, 'It was

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

crucial part is played by either community in the ceremonies of the other. A Badaga partner and his family or friends will often be invited to the naming, wedding or funeral of a Toda. The Badagas at these times eat Toda food provided it has been prepared in a separate pot.[14] Similarly Badagas may invite their Toda partners and friends to weddings, funerals and certain of the annual festivals, to most of which the Todas are required to bring some useful present. On these occasions the visiting Todas or Badagas should be fed, and it is also appropriate for the hosts to make small gifts; yet gift exchange is not requisite to all ceremonies.

The Toda, like the Kota, has an obligation to visit the married daughter of each Badaga partner once in a lifetime. He sends word of his intention; then comes and presents her with a buffalo heifer or perhaps something even more valuable. In return she gives him a cloak and possibly some other clothing.

Once a year each Badaga village holds a ceremony at which the cattle are given salty water. The Toda or Todas who are the associates of men in that village are invited on this occasion to take whatever salt is left over from the ceremony (Hockings, 1968c, 414).

All Todas from nearby hamlets are invited to attend the great memorial festival in which Badagas honour one generation of their dead; indeed it cannot take place without permission from some Todas of the neighbourhood. These local men bring cane to use in the catafalque and are offered Re. 1.25 in return. A Toda associated with the Badaga village may opt for the special duty of sitting at the major entrance and receiving each group of visitors. He asks every group if they include any important man—one carrying some administrative portfolio or a member of the gentry.[15] If there is such a man in the group the Toda tells them all to wait while he brings the commune headman to welcome them. Otherwise he conducts the visitors to the street where a great catafalque has been erected. The Toda is fed while he performs this service, and afterwards he gets a gift. Todas may have had a similar role during the funerals of the Badaga divisional headmen. Their main duty seems to have been policing the vast crowds that used to attend those ceremonies (Lütze, 1887, 14; see Plates 13–14).

As was mentioned earlier,

At the present time [1902], the amount of grain supplied by the Badagas is not sufficient for the needs of the Todas, and both

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AN50 Badaga AN50

regular exchange relationship, giving grain to the Irulas in return for honey, bees-wax, timber, nets and other jungle products (Grigg, 1880, 215–216; Macleane, 1893, 373). Like the Kurumbas, Irulas may be asked to play music for Badaga ceremonies when Kotas cannot be approached for a band. Irula women living in the Badaga villages near Ha:sanu:ru have sometimes become the mistresses of those Badagas but not elsewhere.

BADAGAS AND KASUVAS

Although it has been suggested (Thurston, 1909, vol. III, 256; Noble, 1968, 69) that the Kasuvas ('labourers') are merely Irula tribesmen who moved onto the labourer settlements in plantations over the past century, their geographical distribution does not support this. Kasuvas are only found in the Moyar Ditch north of the Nilgiri Plateau, whereas the local Irulas only live south and east of the plateau (Noble, 1968, 6, Fig. 2). At most it can be said that these are two names for people of very similar culture.

The Kasuvas perform a service for the more northerly Badagas analogous to that which the Todas perform for those living farther south: Kasuvas take Badaga cattle down into the Moyar Ditch for grazing and breeding (Francis, 1908, 209; Noble, 1968, 69–72). A Badaga owner occasionally visits his herds there, but the animals are regularly tended by a Kasuva family who jointly receive perhaps six to ten rupees weekly as well as vegetables and grain. In addition they get a ration of rice, an annual supply of clothing and occasional gifts, for example, at a Kasuva wedding. The livestock camps *(hundis)* of Kasuvas are mainly used for breeding, but large numbers of cows and buffaloes may be sent there by the Badagas when grazing on the Nilgiris is sparse. More generally,

> Dry cows are taken down, and good milk yielders are brought back up . . . Milk and buttermilk [yielded by Badaga cattle while in the Moyar Ditch] may be consumed by the Kasuva caretakers. Clarified butter carried up by Badagas or Kasuvas is either sold or consumed by Badagas (Noble, 1968, 72).

Be:ragani, the only Badaga village with a sacred herd attached to its temple (Francis, 1908, 316), has for over two decades kept its

21 Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

177 hundred buffaloes permanently in the Moyar Ditch under the charge of Kasuvas because of shortage of grazing around Be:ragani itself. The herdsmen are paid from temple funds.

(233)

As in the case of Kurumbas, Irulas and Uralis, a Kasuva band may perform at Badaga ceremonies in place of the customary Kota one. Aside from this, there is one annual ceremonial event which has brought the two communities together in considerable numbers over the past decade or so. This is a complex *pu:ja* to the goddess Sikkamma at her Kasuva-owned temple in the Moyar Ditch, held every March. Roughly five thousand Badagas and most Kasuvas attend, the highlights of the event being *pu:ja*, a free meal, and a noisy night-time procession with the goddess' image mounted on an electrically lit elephant.

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BADAGAS AND URALIS

618 The Uralis are a tribe of gatherers and shifting cultivators who inhabit jungles on some southern slopes of the plateau. They have no regular connexion with Badagas, but as they are feared for their sorcery they can depend on alms from Badaga villagers should a crop failure force them to wander up onto the plateau, as it occasionally has. Under unusual circumstances Badagas may pay a band of Uralis to perform music at a ceremony when for some reason Kotas cannot be invited.

177

THE WAINAD GAUDAS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS

621 The Wainad Gaudas are Badagas who settled on the lower plateau some two centuries ago. In proximity to them are various other groups: Kotas, Chettis, Panias, Irulas, Kurumbas and until 1925 some Todas. The Gaudas, a dominant community in the area, cultivate dry and irrigated rice. They claim it was the desire for rice which had prompted their ancestors to move down into the Wainad from Badaga villages on the Nilgiri Plateau.

(713)

621 The community consists only of Gaudas, except one commune which also has some Toreas (now calling themselves Gaudas). The 951 people live in ten communes, each made up of a few hamlets containing one lineage. Every commune has a council, and for complex cases a council of all the Wainad communes is held at

(162)

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41 Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

curable illnesses is described (Chapters 5-8). Some emphasis is placed on reproduction and sexuality (Chapters 3 and 4), because reproductive success is the ultimate test of any society's adaptation to its environment. The role of the therapist and associated specialists, and their relations with their clients, is an extremely critical factor in the maintenance of a folk medical system. Equally important to the propagation of this knowledge is the recruitment of apprentices and the relationships they develop with a therapist (Chapter 10). Care of the living body and the advent of death receive some consideration (Chapters 2 and 9). Finally, this study may be of particular interest to pharmacologists because it identifies each of the substances used in every medicament described (Chapters 4-7).

Differential interaction between Badagas and their environment — an environment which does of course include disease organisms — has over some 20 generations led to a survival of the healthier individuals, a higher fertility, and in general a steady expansion of their occupancy of the Nilgiri Massif, beginning with the founding of Tu:ne:ri village in the sixteenth century on the arrival of a few dozen refugees, and culminating in the very large and prosperous population of today (Diagram 1). The medical ethnography which follows will attempt to delineate the important factors in their adaptation.

Introducing the Badagas

1.2. The Badagas are a community of Hindu peasants who numbered 104,919 people in the official census of 1971. They live almost entirely on the Nilgiri Massif, which is in the westernmost corner of Tamil Nadu State, India, some 11°N from the Equator. The great majority of them are potato, cabbage and tea cultivators, but until the early years of this century they were farming such subsistence crops as barley, wheat, and several millets. The fields surround their villages and farms. They rarely irrigate, but rely instead on the two regular monsoons. Some people also keep herds of buffalo and cattle for milk and other dairy products, but not for meat.

Their long rows of brick houses lie along the leeward slopes of the hills, and are thus protected from the worst of the rains. In every village there are also temples or shrines to various Hindu gods. Badagas are nearly all Hindus of Saivite persuasion; two small but significant minorities are the Lingayats and the Christians.

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

175 292 784 [187] after a few hours. This seemingly trivial belief had a hygienic importance, for it meant that fresh milk would be used quickly and not kept, lest the tabu about boiling be violated. If milk were allowed to "boil up" (i.e., curdle) *of its own accord*, this was taken as an omen of imminent danger or death for the household, and thus a very serious matter indeed.

175 751 233 The effect upon Badaga health of the changes in drinking habits outlined above was reinforced by other cultural practices, specifically in regard to buffalo dung and spitting. Various maps of Badaga villages made in the first half of the nineteenth century show that several stone kraals were located just outside each village. This means that the fecal matter of buffalo herds was confined to a certain place; (I have myself seen dung over a foot deep in some kraals). Unsavoury though these places must have been, they ensured that the dung was not spread throughout the habitation area of each village, and this substantially reduced "the chance of transference of enzootic and epizootic diseases to man" (Alland 1970: 56). As the value of farmland for tea and potato cultivation grew, especially during the present century, the Badaga population increased dramatically but the size of the cattle herds dwindled. The present-day situation is therefore that Badaga population density is vastly higher than it was, but the risks of cattle-borne infection are proportionately much less because the lack of grazing has forced them to make heavy reductions in the size of their herds and abandon many of the kraals. [161]

751 514 As we shall see below (2.11), indiscriminate spitting was not allowed in and near the home or temple. Spittoons were used inside the house; and a proverb stressed that, "If you ask for an obligation it is essential to see the right people: it is essential to spit in the proper place." With this attitude prevalent, the spread of various viruses and of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* has been greatly curtailed. The regular washing of the body and shaving of pubic hair described below (2.9, 2.13) have also contributed to health by restricting the incidence of bodily fungi and lice-borne diseases (Alland 1970: 58). In nearly all villages the houses are built in parallel lines with solid stone or brick walls partitioning each house from its neighbours. In Ke:ti, a typical village in this respect, it was found that on the average each row of houses was separated from those in front and behind it by a distance of 10 meters, which was mostly the span of the courtyards. This relative lack of crowding of living space has

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[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 13]

8: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1982 AN50 Badaga AN50

the kinship system in the Badaga case as having developed as a means of assigning and transferring ownership of and rights in property, especially cattle and houses, but to a lesser extent land too. We must remember that in the early days Badagas practised swidden agriculture (although strangely that is not mentioned in the early ballads), and the Nilgiri population density was so low that land really had no market value there and was very easy to come by.

Now, keeping a herd of buffaloes requires adequate grazing and certain other conditions. One is the presence of a number of active men, typically brothers, who will keep the herd together while grazing and fend off tigers when possible. Women could not do this work: the epic poem *Ba:la Sevana* ridicules the mother of the hero for trying to drive the family's herd out to graze with a stick in her hand. Both swidden and ordinary plough agriculture also called for the combined efforts of several men (as well as a number of women), and so here too Badagas found a good reason for cultivating their fields as a joint family. Many still do so today. The point to be noted is that both the buffalo-herding and ox-ploughing and swidden cultivation were economic conditions that favoured patrilocality, the joint family, and brother/sister exchange at marriage—this latter a preference which maintained a balance of manpower between two intermarrying families or settlements. If a youth married his FZD and her brother in turn married *his* MBD, brother/sister exchange would result, the ideal of cross-cousin marriage would be honoured, the two families involved would have asserted their equality, and close relations would ensue between them. Where brother/sister exchange has occurred, divorce becomes rather more difficult because it places great strains on the other couple, those who are not getting divorced.

The girls in this system invariably go off to another village in marriage at or shortly after menarche, where they will be needed to *(a)* do house-work and look after small children; *(b)* do some sowing, weeding and reaping in the fields; and *(c)* raise a new generation of farmers and buffalo herdsmen. In this married situation the birth of a son means that a woman has largely fulfilled all three of her obligations to the family she has joined—for on marriage a Badaga girl relinquishes membership in her natal family, lineage, and village, and joins those of her husband. Her membership in them is made especially manifest when her husband dies and a son continues to support her in her husband's village; and when she too dies it is her husband's village and its headman who are responsible for conducting her funeral, with the collaboration of her husband's family.

The economic decision-making rests with the adult men: when to sow, what to plant in each kind of soil, when and where to move the cattle in search of new grazing, when to harvest, and, in former times, when to move the swidden. These decisions call for accurate topographical knowledge, and it is thus both appropriate and necessary that the detailed local knowledge which boys acquire in work and play should be put to good use when they